



Conserving California's waterfowl, wetlands, and waterfowling heritage.

February 19, 2004

California Bay-Delta Authority Members
California Bay-Delta Authority
650 Capitol Mall, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Authority Members,

On behalf of the California Waterfowl Association (CWA), I am writing today to express our organization's support for balanced implementation of the CalFed Bay-Delta Program ("CalFed"). CWA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization of over 18,500 members committed to the conservation and wise management of California's waterfowl and wetlands. California has lost roughly 90% of its historical wetlands; more than any other state in the U.S. Among our highest priorities are wetlands and associated habitat restorations for the benefit of waterfowl, as well as other wetland-dependent wildlife and people.

We understand the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) recently released a state feasibility study of the In-Delta Storage Project, one of the five surface water storage projects that the CalFed program is currently studying for potential implementation. DWR's report found the project technically feasible and opined project "could provide a variety of benefits and contribute to meeting each of CalFed's four objectives for water supply reliability, water quality, ecosystem restoration and levee system integrity." (Source: DWR's Draft Executive Summary, In-Delta Storage Program State Feasibility Study, January 2004)

Of critical interest to CWA are the ecosystem restoration and habitat benefits associated with the In-Delta Storage Project. Nine thousand acres on two of the four project islands will be set aside permanently as wetland and wildlife habitat, forming a mosaic of seasonal and permanent wetlands, riparian woodland zones, ponds and lakes, and open grassland areas. The habitat islands will provide extremely valuable wetland and wildlife benefits to the Delta, supporting a wide variety of species, including listed and endangered plants and animals and migratory waterfowl. The conservation area formed by the project will be among the largest in the area.



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CWA is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization (94-1149574).

It is rare to find a surface water storage project that provides new water supplies and storage capacity, and also generates significant habitat benefits as the In-Delta Storage Project does. We are pleased to note the important progress made by DWR in advancing this project. The CalFed Bay-Delta Program was founded on the premise that all program elements, water supply, water quality, ecosystem restoration and levee system integrity, would advance in a balanced manner. The In-Delta Storage Project provides the CalFed Bay-Delta Authority with a unique opportunity to implement a project that can provide a variety of environment and water supply benefits for California.

Given its promising progress to date, we encourage the Authority to move forward with its review of the In-Delta Storage Project. We understand all other proposed storage projects under consideration by CalFed are at very preliminary phases of investigation and also don't contain significant habitat benefits. To date, the In-Delta Storage Project is the only proposed water storage and supply project to have been determined technically feasible and, therefore, most likely to actually move to implementation.

On behalf of the California Waterfowl Association, thank you again for your leadership role in advancing the CalFed Bay-Delta Program.

Sincerely,



M. Robert McLandress, Ph. D.
President

cc: California Congressional Legislators
Mike Chrisman, Secretary California Resources Agency
California State Senate Agriculture and Water Committee
California State Assembly Water, Parks & Wildlife Committee
Dan Skopec, Office of the Governor
Dennis Albiani, Office of the Governor
Patrick Wright, Director, California Bay-Delta Authority
Bay Delta Public Advisory Committee
✓ Jeremy Arrich, Department of Water Resources